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IN THE CLAIMS

Amended claims follow:

1. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer program operable to control a master computer to scan a plurality of computer files to identify one or more computer files having one or more predetermined characteristics indicative of a computer file having at least some specified content, said computer program comprising:

scan initiating logic operable in response to a scan initiating command to initiate a scan of said plurality of computer files;

scan dividing logic operable to divide said scan into a plurality of tasks;

task issuing logic operable to issue at least some of said plurality of tasks to one or more further computers to be performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

task result receiving logic operable to receive from said one or more further computers results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

scan result merging logic responsive to said results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers to identify any of said plurality of computer files having any of said one or more predetermined characteristics to provide a merged scan result; and

task performing logic such that said master computer may also perform one or more of said tasks, wherein said scan dividing logic identifies high priority tasks with said high priority tasks being performed by said task performing logic of said master computer.

2. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing an specified computer program.

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3. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 2, wherein said specified computer program is a computer virus, worm or Trojan.
4. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing content to be banned, redirected or quarantined.
5. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise computer files stored on one or more networked data storage devices.
6. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise received and sent messages.
7. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise data transmission streams.
8. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files are stored remotely from said master computer.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer program operable to control a master computer to scan a plurality of computer files to identify one or more computer files having one or more predetermined characteristics indicative of a computer file having at least some specified content, said computer program comprising:
  - scan initiating logic operable in response to a scan initiating command to initiate a scan of said plurality of computer files;
  - scan dividing logic operable to divide said scan into a plurality of tasks;

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task issuing logic operable to issue at least some of said plurality of tasks to one or more further computers to be performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

task result receiving logic operable to receive from said one or more further computers results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

scan result merging logic responsive to said results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers to identify any of said plurality of computer files having any of said one or more predetermined characteristics to provide a merged scan result; and

task monitoring logic operable to monitor proper execution of said tasks by said one or more further computers, wherein said task monitoring logic is operable to detect if a task has been pending with a further computer for more than a predetermined time and if so reissuing said task to another computer, wherein if a task has been pending with said further computer for more than a predetermined time, then one or more of:

further tasks are not issued to said further computer; and  
a diagnostic process is initiated.

12. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 11, wherein said task monitoring logic is operable to poll said one or more further computers for information regarding a processing status of a task being performed by a respective further computer.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said one or more further computers include a local further computer connected to a system bus of said master computer.

16.-23. (Cancelled)

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24. (Previously Presented) A method of controlling a master computer to scan a plurality of computer files to identify one or more computer files having one or more predetermined characteristics indicative of a computer file having at least some specified content, said method comprising the steps of:

in response to a scan initiating command, initiating a scan of said plurality of computer files;

dividing said scan into a plurality of tasks;

issuing at least some of said plurality of tasks to one or more further computers to be performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

receiving from said one or more further computers results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers; and

in response to said results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers, identifying any of said plurality of computer files having any of said one or more predetermined characteristics to provide a merged scan result, wherein said master computer may also perform one or more of said tasks, wherein said step of dividing identifies high priority tasks with said high priority tasks being performed by said master computer.

25. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing an specified computer program.

26. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said specified computer program is a computer virus, worm or Trojan.

27. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing content to be banned, redirected or quarantined.

28. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise computer files stored on one or more networked data storage devices.

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29. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise received and sent messages.

30. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise network data traffic.

31. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said plurality of computer files are stored remotely from said master computer.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of said master computer monitoring proper execution of said tasks by said one or more further computers.

35. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 34, wherein said monitoring includes polling said one or more further computers for information regarding a processing status of a task being performed by a respective further computer.

36. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 34, wherein monitoring includes detecting if a task has been pending with a further computer for more than a predetermined time and if so reissuing said task to another computer.

37. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 36, wherein if a task has been pending with said further computer for more than a predetermined time, containing content to be banned, redirected or quarantined.

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38. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said one or more further computers include a local further computer connected to a system bus of said master computer.

39.-45. (Cancelled)

46. (Previously Presented) Apparatus including a master computer for scanning a plurality of computer files to identify one or more computer files having one or more predetermined characteristics indicative of a computer file having at least some specified content, said apparatus comprising:

- a scan initiator operable in response to a scan initiating command to initiate a scan of said plurality of computer files;

- a scan divider operable to divide said scan into a plurality of tasks;

- a task issuer operable to issue at least some of said plurality of tasks to one or more further computers to be performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

- a task result receiver operable to receive from said one or more further computers results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers;

- a scan result merging processor responsive to said results of said tasks performed by respective ones of said one or more further computers to identify any of said plurality of computer files having any of said one or more predetermined characteristics to provide a merged scan result; and

- a task performer such that said master computer may also perform one or more of said tasks, wherein said scan divider identifies high priority tasks with said high priority tasks being performed by said task performer of said master computer.

47. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing an specified computer program.

48. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 47, wherein said specified computer program is a computer virus, worm or Trojan.

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49. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said one or more predetermined characteristics include a computer file containing content to be banned, redirected or quarantined.

50. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise computer files stored on one or more networked data storage devices.

51. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said plurality of computer files comprise received and sent messages.

52. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said plurality of computer files are stored remotely from said master computer.

53. (Cancelled)

54. (Cancelled)

55. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, further comprising a task monitor operable to monitor proper execution of said tasks by said one or more further computers.

56. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 55, wherein said task monitor is operable to poll said one or more further computers for information regarding a processing status of a task being performed by a respective further computer.

57. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 55, wherein said task monitor is operable to detect if a task has been pending with a further computer for more than a predetermined time and if so reissuing said task to another computer.

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58. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 57, wherein if a task has been pending with said further computer for more than a predetermined time, containing content to be banned, redirected or quarantined.

59. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein said one or more further computers include a local further computer connected to a system bus of said master computer.

60.-66. (Cancelled)